

CHAPTER 21

SALADS AND SALAD DRESSINGS

GENERAL

Green, leafy vegetables provide a balance of nutrients in our diet and should be a part of the lunch and, dinner meal. Salads are vitamin-rich, high in fiber, and low in calories, and they add color to the meal. Salad bars are an excellent way to provide a wide variety of fresh or canned vegetables and permit diners to select those that they desire.

SALADS

Salads increase the variety, acceptability, and nutritional content of the meal. Salads and salad bars should be offered twice a day in the dining facility as an accompaniment to the main course. Recipes for salads listed in the master menu are in TM 10-412. Some general rules for preparing salads are:

- Make salads simple, but orderly and neat.
- If the recipe calls for ingredients to be sliced, make the slices thin and even. If the recipe calls for the ingredients to be cut in wedges or chunks, cut all the pieces the same size.
- Do not mince the principal ingredients. Dice or chop them into pieces approximately one-fourth of an inch long to give texture to the salad.
- Use highly flavored foods such as green peppers and onions sparingly. The strong flavors tend to overpower the more delicate flavors of the other ingredients.
- Store and chill salad ingredients in covered containers.
- Have the dressing compliment the salad, both in type and flavor. Use a rich dressing for a light salad and a light dressing for a heavy salad. Cole-slaw may have either a light or heavy dressing, depending on how it best compliments the rest of the menu.
- Avoid overgarnishing.
- See that the foods in salads contrast in color, shape, texture, and flavor. Consider flavor and

color combinations from the standpoint of palatability and attractive appearance. For example, the color of tomatoes does not combine attractively with the color of beets. A cherry gelatin salad served on fresh lettuce is an example of an attractive food contrasting in color, shape, texture, and flavor.

SALAD VEGETABLES

Both raw and cooked vegetables can be used in salads. Cooked or canned vegetables are normally drained according to the procedures in TM 10-412. Some suggestions for preparing commonly used raw vegetables are given in the paragraph.

Greens, Lettuce, and Cabbage

These items should be culled, washed gently but thoroughly. Place them in ice water, if wilted, to help restore crispness. Items should then be drained and torn (lettuce) or cut into bite size pieces according to the specific recipe.

Celery

Stalks should be separated and washed thoroughly. There is a tendency to trim excessive portions of the stalks and discard them. In most cases only the root portion should be discarded. The leafy portion can be used in tossed salads or for soup stock. The main stalk is then cut or diced in accordance with the intended use. For example, stuffed celery would be cut approximately 2 inches long using the full width, while celery sticks would be in 2-inch-long strips.

Cucumbers

The cucumber can be served with or without the peelings. Cucumber slices for tossed salad, for a relish tray, or cucumber salad would normally be

served with the peeling. Cucumber sticks would normally be peeled first.

Carrots

Carrots can be used peeled or just washed thoroughly. They can also be used raw or cooked depending on the type salad being prepared.

Onions

Dry onions are always peeled and sliced or diced according to the specific recipe being used. Whole rings are used primarily as garnish or for use on hamburgers. Green onions are diced for salads and served whole for relish trays.

Peppers

Peppers (sweet, banana, hot) can be served in slices for relish trays or diced for salads. In all cases the stem and seeds are removed and the item washed prior to processing.

Radishes and Tomatoes

These items are washed and sliced or diced depending on whether they will be used in a salad or as a relish tray.

SALAD FRUITS

You can use canned, frozen, dried, and fresh fruits in salads. Most fruit can be used peeled or unpeeled. Follow the procedures in this paragraph for using canned, frozen, dried, and fresh fruits.

Canned and Frozen

Canned and frozen fruits should be drained before use. Use the fruit and liquid as specified in the recipe.

Dried

Wash and drain raisins, prunes, and other dried fruits thoroughly. Prepare them according to the recipe.

Fresh

Fresh fruits should be ripe, firm, and unblemished. The fruit, except bananas, should be washed, drained thoroughly, and chilled before use.

Apples and Bananas

Cut apples and bananas into bite-size pieces or slices or as specified in the recipe. Follow the recipe carefully and keep the fruit from becoming discolored by using a natural antioxidant, such as lemon juice, as detailed in the applicable recipe.

Citrus Fruit

Oranges and grapefruit can be peeled more easily if placed in hot water for a few minutes. Use a sharp knife to cut through the rind vertically in several places, and then pull off the rind a few sections at a time. The fruit should then be sliced or diced according to the specific recipe.

GELATIN SALADS

Gelatin salads are eye-catchers for almost any meal and are easy to prepare. Follow recipe directions for dissolving the gelatin. Add fruit (except fresh pineapple) and vegetables when the gelatin has thickened slightly. If ingredients are added before the gelatin has partially thickened, some of the ingredients will settle to the bottom. Gelatin salads can be molded in muffin tins and turned out as individual servings. To free the salad, dip the bottoms of the muffin tins in hot water (150°F to 160°F) for about one minute. If muffin tins are not available, mold the salad in flat pans, and cut them into individual servings.

COMBINING INGREDIENTS

How you combine salad ingredients will determine whether the end result is an appealing,

fresh-looking salad or not. To combine salad ingredients, you should--

- Handle the ingredients carefully. Overhandling results in an unattractive salad.
- Mix or toss the salad lightly to avoid crushing or mashing the ingredients.
- Use a fork and spoon to toss the salad. Use a container large enough to toss the salad without crushing it or spilling it.
- Use a basting spoon for blending soft ingredients such as fruit pieces and cottage cheese or potato salad.
- Mix the ingredients as close to serving time as possible.
- Use fresh, crisp lettuce leaves as a base for individual salads.
- Use an ice-cream scoop to transfer cottage cheese and other soft salads to the salad bowls.
- Arrange fruit sections neatly.
- Use a food-turner or pie- and cake-server to place gelatin salad on the salad plate.
- Arrange garnishes neatly. Never try to rearrange a salad.

SALAD DRESSINGS

Salad dressing is an indispensable compliment to a salad. It adds flavor, color, and nutrition. Serve dressings suitable in flavor and consistence. If possible, give the diner a choice of at least three different varieties of dressings. Always include low-calorie, low-fat dressings for fresh salads.

When preparing French dressing, use a wire whip to beat the combined ingredients. Store the dressing in a covered container and beat or shake well before serving. The appearance of the salad dressing is just as important as the appearance of any other item on the serving line. The dressing must look fresh and appetizing and should be served in compressible dispensers, closed dispensers, or individual packages. Identify each dressing so that diners can make a choice.

SALAD BARS

Salad bars provide an excellent method to merchandise fresh fruits and vegetables and permit diners to build their own salad. Each dining facility SOP should address how the salad bar is to be established and the items to be included. Salad bars must be properly set up and maintained throughout the meal serving period. Do not overstock fresh items on the bar. Use small serving pans, and replenish the items often. Do not forget premade salads such as potato, macaroni, and so forth. Sort, trim, core, stem, separate, and wash salad bar ingredients. Discard damaged or decayed items. For detailed instructions on preparing salad bar items, refer to TM 10-412 and to the information on salad vegetables in this chapter. Besides vegetables discussed earlier, Bermuda onions, green onions, cheese, croutons, bacon bits, mushrooms, olives, grated cheeses, chopped eggs, and many other items may be included to add variety and enhance the salad bar.